

wings. Their leader was the legendary Captain Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., who would go on to become the first African-American brigadier general in the U.S. Air Force. His father, Benjamin O. Davis, Sr., was the first Black brigadier general in the U.S. Army.

There were a total of 932 Tuskegee Airmen pilots, and another 10,000 Tuskegee Airmen—and women—who served as mechanics, radio operators, and other essential support positions. They conducted more than 700 bomber escort missions—and they never lost a single lost a single aircraft—not one. They were the only fighter group in World War II with a perfect record of protecting bombers.

White U.S. military pilots were permitted to fly no more than 52 missions during World War II. Some Tuskegee Airman flew as many as 100 missions. Sixty-six Tuskegee Airmen died in combat. Thirty-three were held as prisoners of war.

In March 2007, the Tuskegee Airmen as a group were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor Congress can bestow. The ceremony was held in the Rotunda of the Capitol. I will never forget the sight of 300 Tuskegee Airman dressed in red sports jackets, saluting the American flag in that hallowed space. Some were in wheelchairs. But when the National Anthem played, they all rose to their feet and stood straight and proud.

Just before the Congressional Gold Medal ceremony, I had the privilege of hosting several Tuskegee Airmen with Illinois roots in my office. Then-Senator Obama stopped by to pay his respects. It was a historic and humbling moment.

I met Lt. Colonel George Sherman, who grew up in Moline and joined the Army Air Corps in 1944 at the age of 18. He had to take the physical twice; he was rejected the first time because of his buck teeth, but he didn't give up. He ended up serving 22 years in the Air Force.

First Lieutenant Shelby Westbook was born in Arkansas and lost both of his parents when he was just 12. He flew 60 missions over 12 countries in Europe. After the war, he wanted to attend engineering school. The first school he applied to rejected him because it didn't accept Black students. He moved to Chicago, earned a degree, and worked as an electrical engineer for decades.

First Lieutenant Robert Martin famously claimed to have flown "63 and a half missions." On his 64th combat mission, he was shot down over Yugoslavia. He was hidden by antifascist partisans until he could return to his unit. After the war, he worked as an electrical engineer for the city of Chicago for nearly 40 years.

Flight Officer John Lyle—"Captain Jack"—to his friends—grew up on Chicago's South Side. He flew 26 combat missions. After the war, he earned a college degree but couldn't find work in his field so, for a time, he washed

windows of downtown skyscrapers. Eventually, he owned his own insurance agency, a fish and chicken restaurant, and a tree-trimming service.

Lt. Bev Dunjill flew more than 100 combat missions between World War II and the Korean war. He later worked for the Illinois Department of Human Rights.

All of those heroes are gone now. But their valor and impact are not forgotten. The Tuskegee Airmen and the all-Black Montfort Point Marines were among nearly 1 million Black Americans who served in World War II. Most saw the war as a battle on two fronts—one against fascism overseas and the other against racially discriminatory laws and attitudes in America.

Their goal, they said, was "the Double V," victory for democracy overseas and at home. The change at home did not come easily, but it did come. Three years after World War II ended, President Truman ordered an end to segregation in the U.S. Armed Forces. And the service and sacrifice of the Tuskegee Airmen and other Black veterans and leaders helped set the stage for the civil rights movement of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s.

Today, as the last surviving Tuskegee Airman near their 100th birthdays and we lose hundreds of World War II veterans each day, we are painfully aware that the democracy and unity they paid such a high price for is under threat, both overseas and at home. The peace of Europe and democracy itself is under fire from Russia in Ukraine. And our sense of security and national unity seems to be fraying at home. Violence—especially gun violence—threatens us all, even our children.

Our progress against division and discrimination often feels shaky. We are pitted against each other by those who believe that conflict and anger is good for their political interests or their profit sheets. But it doesn't have to be this way.

As we prepare to remember and honor those who gave their lives for our freedom, let us resolve to do our part, in our time, to keep our Nation free and undivided.

NOTICE OF A TIE VOTE UNDER S. RES. 27

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to print the following letter in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC.

To the Secretary of the Senate:

PN1670, the nomination of Nancy G. Abudu, of Georgia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit, having been referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee, with a quorum present, has voted on the nomination as follows—

(1) on the question of reporting the nomination favorably with the recommendation

that the nomination be confirmed, 11 ayes to 11 noes; and

In accordance with section 3, paragraph (1)(A) of S. Res. 27 of the 117th Congress, I hereby give notice that the Committee has not reported the nomination because of a tie vote, and ask that this notice be printed in the Record pursuant to the resolution.

HONORING TED BENDA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, last April, I came to the floor to honor fallen Iowa State Patrol Sergeant Jim Smith, who was murdered trying to apprehend a violent criminal. Last week, justice was served. His killer was convicted. I thank everyone who worked on this case.

Today, after the completion of National Police Week, it is with a heavy heart that I recognize another Iowa State Patrol officer killed in the line of duty last year in a tragic car accident. State Patrol Trooper Ted Benda was a dedicated servant of the people of Iowa for 16 years.

He began his career in Marquette and later moved to the Iowa State Patrol to serve the communities of Mason City and Oelwein. Trooper Benda was beloved by his colleagues who described him as dedicated. He "fully embraced the call to protect the community."

He put his family first, always lent a hand to friends and neighbors and cherished both his country and his community. Even in death, his service continued. As an organ donor, Trooper Benda continued to save lives. Trooper Benda: We thank you.

Trooper Benda left behind a loving family including his wife, Holly, and his four young daughters: Madilyn, Avery, Vivyan, and Sylvia.

Let me say to them: Your immeasurable sacrifice is honored by your community and your country. We thank you.

Losses like Trooper Benda's remind us of the great dangers that law enforcement officers and first responders face in service to our communities.

Last week, the Judiciary Committee held a Police Week markup. We passed several important measures through our committee that will help the police.

Soon, at my request, the Judiciary Committee will have a hearing on attacks on police. I have and will continue to lead efforts in the Senate to support law enforcement. After all that they have done to protect and serve us, it is the least I can do to protect and serve them.

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, in 1988, President Ronald Reagan first recognized May as National Foster Care Month.

Each year since then, the month of May has been recognized as a time to bring awareness to youth in foster care.